

TRIBUTE TO TED KOENIG

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, this week, I have the distinct honor of recognizing Ted Koenig of Kalispell for lending a hand with the humanitarian relief efforts in the U.S. Virgin Islands. A few months ago, after the devastation of hurricanes Irma and Maria, Ted left his home in northwestern Montana and traveled to the Caribbean to take part in the recovery.

When Ted arrived on the island of St. Thomas in late September, he arrived to immense destruction. His initial mission on the island was to serve as a planner, helping to assess needs and coordinate resources for the recovery, a job Ted is familiar with as he serves in a similar position as the northwestern Montana disaster program manager for the Red Cross. However, Ted spent the first few days hand-delivering essential supplies to areas outside the reach of emergency distribution centers. After helping deliver the basic necessities, Ted spent the final 2 weeks consolidating damage assessments to inform decisionmakers about the requirements for longer term recovery.

Helping others in need is common in Big Sky Country, and Ted's journey to St. Thomas is another example of this ethic in action. This ethic runs deep from Kalispell to Broadus, from the Flathead River to the Powder River, and is revealed in Montana having one of the highest per capita Peace Corps volunteer rates in the Nation. It comes as no surprise that Ted served 3 years in the Peace Corps and was stationed in Madagascar. Thank you, Ted, for using your steady determination to help others overcome difficult circumstances.●

REMEMBERING WESLEY F. BUCHELE

• Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, today I want to honor the life and work of a man whose inventions—most notably, the large round hay baler—literally changed the landscape of America. Wesley Fisher Buchele, a native Kansan and professor emeritus of agricultural engineering at Iowa State University, died September 13, 2017, at a hospice in Ames, IA. He was age 97.

Wes and his twin brother Luther were born in a Kansas farmhouse near Cedar Vale, KS, on March 18, 1920, to Charles and Bessie (Fisher) Buchele. Wesley and Luther were the youngest of seven Buchele brothers.

Growing up on a Kansas farm in the 1920s and 1930s was hard work. Economic depression in rural America started early in the 1920s and worsened when the Great Depression hit the entire country in 1929. When Wes was 11, his father, Charles Buchele, died, leaving Wes's mother and the Buchele brothers to run the family farm. Wes and Luther and several other brothers were still in school.

The Bucheles ran a raw milk farm. Among other jobs, Wes delivered fresh

milk early in the morning on his way to school, which sometimes made him late to school. When the principal found out why Wes was late, he essentially gave Wes permission to be late if needed, saying that Wes had made more money for his family that morning than the principal would make all week.

All the brothers worked to fill their father's shoes, driven by the fear of losing the family farm because of a \$5,000 mortgage, roughly \$60,000 in today's money. They succeeded. At the close of the Depression, the Buchele farm was the only one in their valley still in the same family's hands as at the beginning of the Depression.

At age 15, Wes was running a four-man threshing crew, when "it was 105°F in the shade—and there was no shade!" The Buchele brothers bought a used tractor and ran it 24 hours a day, doing contract field work. One night, Wes pulled a night shift on that tractor, and while plowing, he woke up as the tractor powered through a fence.

The experiences of the sweaty, dirty, grueling work of threshing grain and baling hay led him to a lifelong interest in making the lives of farmers easier and safer.

After graduating from Cedar Vale High School, Wes enrolled at Kansas State College where he earned bachelor of Science degree in agricultural engineering. While at Kansas State, Wes met Mary Jagger. They were married at Mary's hometown of Minneapolis, KS, on June 12, 1945.

At K-State, Wes enlisted in the Reserve Officers Training Corps, ROTC. As second lieutenant in the U.S. Army, Wes was on a troop ship sailing toward Japan for the anticipated invasion when Japan announced its surrender after atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Wes was part of the demilitarizing force on the island of Hokkaido and the northern part of the island of Honshu, Japan. After World War II, Wes served in the Army Reserve for 20 years, retiring as a major.

After leaving Active Army Duty, Wes worked as an engineer for several years for John Deere in Waterloo, IA. He then left John Deere to do graduate work at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, where he earned his master's degree agricultural and mechanical engineering. He and Mary then moved to Ames, IA, where he earned his Ph.D. in agricultural engineering and soil physics at Iowa State University.

After earning his Ph.D., Wes taught at Michigan State University in East Lansing, MI, before returning to Iowa State University in 1963 to join its faculty.

As noted by his son, Steven Buchele, after the move back to Ames, "Dad never worked another day of his life. For Dad, it was all fun and interesting and ISU encouraged his imagination and he loved teaching and inventing things. It wasn't work, and he earned the name 'Wild Wes.'"

He also earned the name "Blood and Guts Buchele" for how he championed the cause of farm machinery safety. In class, he showed hundreds of slides of people who had lost arms or legs, hands or feet to a PTO shaft or a grain auger or what a farmer looked like after being sprayed with anhydrous ammonia. One student said that he never looked at farming the same way after seeing Wes's slides.

At Iowa State, Wes's creativity blossomed. He published hundreds of technical articles, aided greatly by the able editing of his wife, Mary. He was awarded 23 patents, the two most notable being the large round baler and the axial-flow threshing cylinder for combines. Almost all combines sold today are rotary combines that employ a variation of the axial-flow threshing cylinder.

Wes also designed blade guards for rotary lawn mowers, a tandem tractor—a precursor to the four-wheel drive tractor—and devices for harvesting crops like strawberries, alfalfa, and marigolds. He developed a ridge-till farming system that, in addition to saving farmers time and fuel, also helped the environment by conserving topsoil and soil moisture. It was a precursor to today's "No-till farming."

Wes loved teaching and mentoring the hundreds of graduate students who came from all over the world specifically to study with him. Upon graduation, they then went into industry or back to their home countries, helping further improve agricultural practices throughout the world.

Wes published three books: "The Grain Harvesters" with Graeme Quick, in 1978; "Just Call Us Luck" with twin brother, Luther, about their childhood in Kansas, in 2008; and "Who Really Invented the Cotton Gin" with William D. Mayfield in 2016. He also wrote many other unpublished books, including a volume two to the Grain Harvesters, and hundreds of short stories.

Leading up to and after retirement in 1989, Mary and Wes traveled the world, teaching in China before and after Tiananmen Square, in Ghana, Australia, Tanzania, Nigeria, and the Philippines.

After the death of his wife, Mary, in 2000, Wes would visit, his four children and their spouses—Rod and his wife, Mary Lou, Marybeth, Sheron and her husband, Curtis, and Steven and his wife, Suzanne, his eight grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren, staying for 6 weeks to 2 months, depending on "the list." "When Dad arrived, he would ask for 'the list,' a list of things that needed fixing around the house, promising to stay only as long as there were things to do on that list. Then he would move on to the next child's family—and a new list," said Steve Buchele.

On Labor Day 2017, Wes decided to mow the backyard of the home in Ames he shared with his daughter, Marybeth. As he used a rope to lower the lawn mower down a slope to finish mowing,